

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GABORO 00035 091535Z

44

ACTION AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7480

INFO AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

UNCLAS GABORONE 0035

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SEDU, BC. LT, WZ

SUBJECT: UBLS DEVELOPMENTS

1. IN MAJOR ARTICLE COVERING HALF OF FRONT PAGE BOTSWANA DAILY NEWS JANUARY 8 EDITION REPORTED SPEECH BY GABORONE PROVINCE- CHANCELLOR N.O.H. SETIDISHO TO AN AUDIENCE OF 400 STUDENTS AND LECTURERS. MAIN THRUST OF THE SPEECH WAS TO ASSURE THE STUDENTS INCLUDING THOSE 60 RETURNING FROM THE ROMA CAMPUS THAT ALTHOUGH ACCOMMODATION AND OTHER FACILITIES MIGHT BE TIGHT, THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD DO ALL IT CAN TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION AND THAT APPROPRIATE ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE MADE FOR THOSE STUDENTS DOING THEIR FOURTH YEAR TO BE AWARDED UBLS DEGREES AND FOR THOSE IN THE FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD YEARS TO COMPLETE DEGREES UNDER UBLS REGULATIONS.

2. HE SAID THAT STUDENTS WHO ENROLL THIS YEAR WILL BE REGISTERED UNDER NEW REGULATIONS. A NEW DEGREE STRUCTURE AND NEW SET OF REGULATIONS WILL BE DRAFTED BETWEEN NOW AND JUNE 30.

3. SETIDISHO EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT PRESS REPORTS THAT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO WILL AWARD UBLS DEGREES. HE
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PAGE 02 GABORO 00035 091535Z

SAID THAT BOTH BOTSWANA AND SWAZILAND STILL MAINTAIN THAT THE

REGIONAL UNIVERSITY, UBLS, STILL EXISTS LEGALLY AND THAT SWAZILAND AND BOTSWANA CONSTITUTE THE REMAINING PARTNERS OF UBLS.

4. HE SAID THAT BOTSWANA AND SWAZILAND MAY BE COMPELLED TO REESTABLISH THE UNIVERSITY UNDER A NEW CHARTER. QUOTE IT IS OUR EXPECTATION THAT THERE WILL BE A NEW UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA AND SWAZILAND, END QUOTE. HE SAID, ADDING THAT THE CHARTER WILL BE IMPLEMENTED POSSIBLY IN JULY OF THIS YEAR. HE NOTED THAT IN VIEW OF PRESENT FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS, THE SIZE OF THE POPULATION AND THE NEED TO ATTRACT DONOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONTINUE TO OPERATE AS A REGIONAL UNIVERSITY FOR A FEW YEARS.

5. SETIDISHO ADDRESSED THE QUESTION OF THE BREAKUP OF THE UNIVERSITY BY DISMISSING ALLEGATIONS BY THE LESOTHO GOVERNMENT THAT IT BROKE FROM THE PARTNERSHIP BECAUSE OF THE CONTINUED APPOINTMENT OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR, CYRIL ROGERS. HE ASSERTED THAT QUOTE THE NEED TO DEVELOP PART TWO TEACHING IN BOTSWANA AND SWAZILAND, THE NEED TO DEVELOP THE THREE CAMPUSES TO EQUAL STATUS AND STRENGTH, THE NEED FOR EACH COUNTRY TO ESTABLISH A FIRM BASIS FOR A STRONG NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF THE FUTURE, AND THE NEED FOR EQUAL PARTNERSHIP IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF UBLS WERE THE CAUSES OF THE BREAKUP. END QUOTE.

6. THE ARTICLE CONCLUDES BY REPORTING THAT SETIDISHO DISCLOSED THAT THE BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT HAS APPROVED THE SUM OF R300,000 FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR TO PROVIDE SCIENCE EQUIPMENT, ADDITIONAL TEACHING STAFF, LIBRARY REFERENCE MATERIALS AND OTHER FACILITIES.
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